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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4200  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
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RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY  
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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY  
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DEPT. FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2017  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [US](#)  
SUBJECT: GOT OFFICIALS STRESS UNITY, RECORD NUMBERS MARCH  
ON REPUBLIC DAY

REF: A. ANKARA 2662 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2658

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: As senior GOT officials stressed national unity on the 84th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic, Turks marched in record numbers in cities across the country to commemorate the holiday and to protest PKK terrorism. Turkish officials publicly characterized October 26 GOT-GOI talks concerning the PKK as civil but unsatisfactory. Meanwhile, anti-PKK operations continue throughout SE Turkey, with tens of terrorists reported killed over the three-day weekend, along with three soldiers. Press reports over the weekend alleged that the eight soldiers abducted by the PKK on October 21 would be released within a few days, but we have no confirmation that a release has occurred or is imminent. Behind-the-scenes efforts continue to gain their release. Approximately 500 people demonstrated peacefully in front of the Embassy on October 27. END SUMMARY

GOT LEADERS STRESS UNITY; PLEDGE TO CONTINUE FIGHT AGAINST  
TERROR

[1](#)2. (U) President Gul, PM Erdogan, Parliamentary Speaker Toptan, and Turkish General Staff Chief of Staff General Buyukanit all released statements to mark Turkey's Republic Day October 29. Gul stressed that Turkey should preserve its unity and togetherness to overcome hurdles, as it did during its war of independence. He described Turkey as a leading actor in the regional arena, seeking friendship and looking for solutions. He also stressed that Turkey draws great strength from its diversity. PM Erdogan emphasized the importance of maintaining a secure and stable environment in Turkey, and of the country's unity and integrity. He underscored that the basic founding values of the Republic -- including secularism -- are beyond dispute.

13. (U) Toptan said it is the duty of each and every Turk to work for a more democratic Turkey without making concessions to the country's unity and integrity. He expressed regret that some countries encourage terrorism and reiterated that Turkey will not surrender to terrorism. Defense Chief GEN Yasar Buyukanit decried recent PKK attacks as threats to Turkey's national structure and said they had served to reinforce Turkey's determination to fight back. He pledged that the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) will make those responsible for the recent terrorist attacks "suffer pain on a scale they cannot imagine." No one should doubt, Buyukanit said, that the TAF will continue this battle until the terrorists are neutralized.

GOT-GOI TALKS -- ACTION NEEDED, NOT MORE DIALOGUE  
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14. (SBU) GOT officials characterized October 26 talks between Turkish and Iraqi delegations as a friendly exchange, but stressed that Turkey requires action by Government of Iraq and Kurdish Regional Government authorities, not more dialogue. Turkish press reported the talks collapsed when Iraqi DefMin. Jassim said his government has no information regarding the location of PKK camps in northern Iraq and asked Turkey for more time to find them. FM Babacan reportedly responded harshly to Jassim, noting that Turkey had already submitted to Iraq photos of PKK camps there, noting that international journalists seem to have no difficulty finding where PKK leaders are based. Turkish MFA spokesperson Levent Bilman said that Turkey was looking forward to urgent steps by Iraq against the PKK, and that the proposals made by GOI officials in the meeting would require an unacceptably long time to produce results.

TURKISH PUBLIC MARCHES...OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT FOR REPUBLIC,  
IN OPPOSITION TO TERROR  
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15. (U) Millions of Turks took to the streets over the weekend, both to commemorate the October 29 national day and protest against the PKK and continued terrorist attacks. Record numbers of people used the opportunity to make their voices heard. Hundreds of thousands of marchers participated in an annual torchlight procession on the evening of October 29 in Ankara that culminates at Ataturk's Mausoleum (Anitkabir). 427,124 visitors were registered visiting Anitkabir during the day, compared to about 68,000 on the same day last year. About 200,000 marched in Samsun on the Black Sea coast, chanting slogans against the PKK. Some 30,000 attended a rally in Adapazari, one hour east of Istanbul, chanting slogans such as "Martyrs won't die and the motherland will not be divided," and "Turks and Kurds are brothers and the PKK is a traitor." Thousands attended anti-PKK rallies on October 27 and 28 as well. Around 5,000 gathered in Izmit, with three people, including one child, injured when a sound bomb exploded. 30,000 attended a rally in Bursa, another 30,000 in Kastamonu, 5,000 in Erzincan, and 10,000 in Van.

COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATIONS CONTINUE  
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16. (SBU) Counter insurgency operations continued throughout southeastern Turkey over the weekend. All media report a major security force operation in Tunceli province, hundreds of kilometers northwest of the Turkey-Iraq border, with as many as 8,000 troops involved. The operation was undertaken based on radio intercepts indicating the PKK was planning to carry out activities to disrupt Republic Day celebrations. Terrain in Tunceli and neighboring Erzincan provinces is particularly difficult; the area has been used for years as a hideout for a variety of terrorist groups, including the PKK. TGS sources claim at least 20 terrorists were killed in the operation, with one soldier killed by a landmine.

¶7. (SBU) Turkish armed forces reportedly bombed PKK hideouts in the Cudi and Gabar mountains near the Turkey-Iraq border. Media report that Turkish troops also have trapped a group of 150 PKK terrorists on Ikiyaka Mountain near the border and are continuing operations against them. Two more soldiers were reported killed in these clashes. TGS claims the number of PKK militants killed in the last eight days has now reached 79.

¶8. (S/NF) Behind-the-scenes efforts continue to gain the release of eight Turkish soldiers abducted by the PKK on October 21. Press reports that the hostages had been released over the weekend, or would be in the coming day or two, could not be confirmed.

SLOWDOWN AT TURKEY-IRAQ BORDER NOT SEEN...YET  
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¶9. (SBU) Contrary to local media reports of commercial truck traffic slowdowns at the Habur Gate border crossing into Iraq, the latest reporting shows no change in the number of commercial vehicles crossing into Iraq. Approximately 800 trucks per day passed through the Habur customs complex into Iraq in recent days, a figure that has remained consistent over the past month. Daily figures for the 24-hour period ending October 29 are 767 trucks entering Iraq and 995 empty vehicles returning from Iraq to Turkey. The number of trucks returning to Turkey has averaged 834 per day in October. The backlog of trucks waiting to cross into Iraq has remained

around 1,700, while the back-up of vehicles returning to Turkey grew from 4,800 on October 27 to about 7,100 on October 29.

DEMONSTRATORS PROTEST PEACEFULLY AT EMBASSY  
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¶10. (SBU) Approximately 500 demonstrators protested peacefully in front of the embassy October 27. Police kept the demonstrators well back from the perimeter of the compound. Turkish National Police (TNP) continue to provide supplemental security support at all mission facilities.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON